

Idaho City Backcountry Yurts

Summer Manual

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) Back country Yurt system. Please take time to make sure that all members of your party read this information before embarking on a tour to any of the yurts.

After reading this material, please evaluate your party's abilities meet the criteria. Please be aware that backcountry travel by horse, mountain bike, or foot can be dangerous. Travel to and from and the use of the yurts is done at your own risk.

BACKGROUND

The Idaho City yurt system started in the fall of 1996 with the first one placed at the Banner Ridge location. From its inception, the yurt system was intended outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the beauty of Idaho's mountains year round. To accomplish this, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Nordic Voice ski club, Idaho City Ranger District, Ada County Park N' Ski Committee, South West Idaho Mountain Bike Association, and dedicated volunteers worked cooperatively together, providing material, labor, and expertise to make the system a reality.

Funding to build the yurts came from a variety of sources such as a National Recreation Trails Fund grant, Park N' Ski monies, and volunteer labor/donations. Monies generated from yurt rentals will first be used to maintain the existing yurts. Any additional income generated is used to operate, maintain and improve the surrounding trail network. This network includes mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, Nordic ski and snowshoe trails.

TRIP PLANNING

Carefully read this material and evaluate yourself and your party. If you feel confident that you have the skills and knowledge to undertake a yurt tour safely, follow these steps:

- ❑ Make a reservation Reservations for stays within IDPR Idaho City Backcountry Yurts can be online at www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov or toll free 1-866-634-3246. Reservations are accepted 9-months in advance of your intended stay and no later than 48-hours prior to your intended arrival. A non-refundable fee of \$6 is assessed at the time your reservation is made. All fees must be paid in advance of your stay.

- ❑ Yurts are reserved from 2 p.m. the day of your reservation until 1 p.m. the following afternoon. The maximum length of stay in the same yurt is 15 in any consecutive 30-days.
- ❑ Maximum number of persons sleeping in yurts is 9. Maximum number of persons using yurts is 12.
- ❑ Check equipment lists (suggested lists are included) prior to departing. Make sure everyone in your party is properly prepared.
- ❑ Before leaving, always tell a friend or relative where you are going, your route and when you plan to return. If for some reason they are concerned about your return, the following numbers are for reporting any problems or emergencies concerning the yurts: Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: 334-4199
- ❑ Before departing, make sure your vehicle is in good condition.
- ❑ Please visit our website at www.idahoparks.org for more information.

NO MOTORIZED USE

Motorized vehicles including motorcycles, ATV's, and 4-wheel drives are not allowed at the yurts. The US Forest Service Travel Plan map designates the trails, old closed roads, and the area surrounding the yurts as a no motorized area. Motorized use of these areas and trails can carry a penalty or fine up to \$5,000.00 and or 6 months in jail.

PARKING AND ROUTES TO YURT

A detailed description of parking and yurt routes are found in each yurt guide. Carefully study the Boise National Forest map and the maps located on our website. Before attempting any yurt tour on your own, you should be experienced in the use of a map and compass, and carry both with you on the tour. Workshops and classes are offered periodically by Boise State University and Boise Community Education to help you learn map and compass skills.

ON THE TRAIL

Whether hiking, biking, or horseback riding to the yurt, don't allow your party to become separated. All trip participants should have an Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System map. This is extremely important in bad weather. Stay together and stay safe. Travel at a pace, which is comfortable for the slowest member of the party. If one member becomes exhausted, your entire party is weakened as a result. A slow, steady pace is time-tested and a safe way of traveling in a group.

ITEMS AT THE YURT

In each yurt, you should find:

2 bunk beds	1 log rack
1 futon, both with mattresses	1 tinder bucket
1 table and cabinet	1 water jug
6 folding chairs	assorted silverware
1 two-burner propane stove	assorted plates bowls, and cups
2 propane lanterns	assorted cooking pots and pans
1 wood stove	miscellaneous kitchen equipment
1 sponge mop	1 broom
1 dust pan	1 buck saw
1 dome opener	2 floor towels
1 ladder	1 fire extinguisher
1 axe	1 hatchet

Located outside: a primitive toilet, a fire pit, a picnic table, and a woodpile. We cannot guarantee all the items listed will be in the yurt. Because of the remote location, it may take us a week or two to replace/repair the item(s). Be prepared and adaptable enough to survive without these items.

LANTERNS, STOVES, AND FIRES

Each yurt has a wood stove, a two-burner propane stove and 2 propane lanterns that use mantles. **You should bring at least two one-pound bottles of propane for each night you plan to stay.** The standard screw-in propane disposable fuel bottle is used in the cooking stove and the lanterns. Carefully read the directions on the stove and lanterns. Leaving the propane valve on and not lighting immediately will form a large invisible cloud which, when lit, may cause a dangerous fireball which could singe hair and perhaps cause serious injury. There may not be unfrozen water sources nearby, so the wood stove can be used for melting water and heating to save propane fuel.

Warnings on Propane Use:

- ❑ Turned off valves for the stove and lanterns are when not in use. If not, the wood-burning stove could ignite the gas.
- ❑ Attach or detach cylinders away from ignition sources and only when stove or lanterns are cool to touch.
- ❑ Leave immediately and ventilate area if you smell gas.

- ❑ Do not store propane near the wood stove or when temperature exceeds 120 degrees.

Propane Lantern Directions:

- ❑ Lower the lanterns for cylinder replacement or lighting. The lanterns are hung from the ceiling by ropes on a pulley system. Be careful not to let the lantern hang at eye level or drop them on the floor. The mantles break easily.
- ❑ To replace mantles, turn off gas valve and tie mantles around groove in burner. Spread mantle out evenly, light bottom of mantle evenly and burn until nothing but white ash remains. Once the mantle is burned, it is very fragile. Be careful not to touch it with a finger or a match.
- ❑ To light, place a lit match in the match hole on bottom of lantern and turn on gas valve.

Note: To reduce fuel consumption and noise, turn fuel valve down to halfway on after the lantern is lit.

Propane Stove Directions:

- ❑ Make sure all connections from the propane bottle to stove are hand tight.
- ❑ To light, hold lighted match near burner and open burner valve.
- ❑ To turn off, close burner valve firmly.
- ❑ Before you leave, clean stove area thoroughly.

Wood Stove Directions:

- ❑ Clean stove window with window cleaner that is provided.
- ❑ To prevent smoke from filling the yurt, it is important to start a large flash fire immediately to preheat the chimney. Place 5 or more sheets of loosely crumpled newspaper, located in the cabinet in the stove and cover with thumb-size dry kindling. Open the draft control by pulling the handle forward to the high position.
- ❑ The handle is located on the front and center of the stove just below the door.

- ❑ Light the newspaper and leave the door slightly ajar (1/8 inch) until all kindling is burning and a hot coal bed is established. Slowly add larger pieces. Lay pieces lengthwise from side-to-side in the hot coal bed with a shallow trench between so that the air can flow directly into the trench and ignite the fuel above. When the fire seems to be at its peak, medium-size logs may be added. Once these logs catch fire and the temperature gauge on the stovepipe reaches 320 degrees, slowly close the door. (Closing the door before the fire has a nice bed of hot coals can reduce the firebox temperature, resulting in an inefficient fire, smoke, and dirty glass.)
- ❑ Achieving the proper draft is important. The draft can be adjusted for a low-burn rate with the handle fully in or to a fast-burn rate with the handle fully out. In the evening before bed, load the stove at least a half hour before bed to ensure a good fire, hot enough to lower the draft control for an overnight burn. For an overnight turn, set the draft control on a low setting.
- ❑ The ashes in the firebox tend to burn themselves up. IDPR staff will clean out ashes as necessary. If for some reason you need to remove them, use the marked ash bucket and dump the ashes at least 200' from the yurt.
DO NOT DUMP THE ASHES OVER THE SIDE OF THE DECK.
- ❑ Don't burn garbage or plastics because they leave a toxic, sticky residue in the chimney, which can cause a chimney fire.
- ❑ Don't hang anything above the wood stove or place anything combustible within 36 inches of the stove (boots, clothing, wood, or paper).
- ❑ Don't burn at continually low settings. If the glass door is constantly blackened it means that the firebox temperature is too low.

Fire Pit Directions:

- ❑ Do not use the split wood from the firewood pile, it is reserved for the wood stove.
- ❑ Make only small fires using the dead wood that is lying on the ground near the yurt. This will help alleviate fire hazards in the area by cleaning up the nearby slash piles. A bucksaw is provided to assist you in cutting wood.
- ❑ Please, do not put rock or other non-flammable material (aluminum foil or glass bottles) in the fire pit. These items are hard to remove and make it difficult to start fires.
- ❑ Do not have fires during high winds and dry conditions. A major wildfire will likely burn all yurts and the yurt and trail system will be abandoned.

- ❑ Please drown the fire with plenty of water, stir it, and drown it again. When extinguishing fires, do not use earth, sand, or otherwise try to smother the fire. This will only insulate the coals. Numerous fires have been traced to burying the coals only to have them re-ignite later.

OPENING, CLOSING AND DAILY PROCEDURES

It is very important to follow these procedures. A checklist is posted in the yurts for your convenience. IDPR has limited staff available to operate and maintain the yurts, so please make sure that your group keeps the yurts in good condition for the next party.

When You Arrive:

1. Roll the storm flaps up. The window storm flaps should be bungeed down when you arrive. If it is warm inside the yurt or if you prefer a view, roll up the storm flaps. Use the ladder stored under a bunk bed to reach the window flaps. The easiest way to roll the flaps up is to tuck in the attached bungee cords and start rolling at one end. Two persons rolling make the job much easier and safer. One can stabilize the ladder while the other clips the roll in place.
2. Open the clear plastic dome with the dome opener located on the wall behind the wood stove. By opening the dome you can quickly cool the interior of the yurt. We ask that you close the window flaps and dome any time you leave for more than a couple of hours or when a storm is pending. A strong storm could arise while you are out and cause damage to the dome, flaps, or yurt.
3. For sanitary reasons, always use the toilet for defecating. The marked grey water drain pipe near the yurt must be used for dirty dishwater disposal. This helps keep animals from being attracted to food smells.
4. If needed clean the wood stove window before you start a fire. Please use the directions noted on the yurt wall to prevent smoke from filling the yurt.

Daily Procedures:

1. The yurt is a no smoking building.
2. Please wipe up any excess moisture on the floors with the floor towels or sponge mop provided.
3. To prevent the transmission of germs between persons and groups, please wash dishes using the three-step (tub) method noted below:
 1. Fill all three tubs with water. Use the biodegradable soap provided to

wash the dishes, then rinse in clean water and dip into the final bleach rinse. To make a bleach water rinse, add a teaspoon of liquid bleach (located in the cabinet) to rinse water.

2. Shake excess water off the dishes and place on the wood dish drying rack provided. Do not wipe dry with a cloth. Use a clean paper towel to wipe down the cabinet and tabletop.
3. After washing and clean up, dump the tubs at the grey water drain pipe outside.
4. Dogs and pets are not allowed on yurt furniture. Dogs and pets are allowed at the yurt site when the trails are not groomed for crosscountry skiing, generally April 1st – December 1st.
5. We ask pack stock users not to water their animals at the designated spot for drinking water. Please fill a bucket in the creek or spring and bring it to the animal or find other springs and creeks that are in the area. Equestrians and other pack stock should follow standard low-impact backcountry camping procedures to minimize damage to the site. An area is designated at each yurt to keep pack stock. A hitching rail for horses is located nearby and is visible from the yurt.
6. Do not put mattresses on the floor or deck.
7. Please do not chop wood on the stone hearth.
8. Please make a journal entry in the yurt logbook during your stay.

Procedures When You Leave:

1. Thoroughly clean the yurt, even under the beds. Sweep out dirt, wood chips with the broom. Even crumbs may attract rodents, ants or bears. Carry out all garbage and food to prevent rodent infestations or animals eating through the yurt walls.
2. Wipe down the table and kitchen cabinet. Place all cooking pots/pans/bowls upside down in cabinet so mice do not dance and water does not sit in them.
3. Pack out what you packed in. We ask that all food be carried out April 30th through November 15th. This will discourage wild animals from trying to break into the yurt. You may leave extra propane bottles, but carry out the empty ones. Anything left in the yurt has to be carried out by volunteers.
4. Empty water from water jug and coffee pots so they do not mildew. Leave lid off of water jug.

5. Move any flammable materials such as paper and kindling away from wood stove.
6. Restock the yurt with wood and kindling from woodpile, so the next group will have dry wood when they enter.
7. Wipe down the toilet seat and close seat cover and sweep the outhouse floor.
8. Make sure gas valves are turned off on the propane stove and lanterns.
9. Place ladder under the deck and return items that were hanging on wall to their proper location (broom, dome opener, buck saw, fire poker, axe and dust pan).
10. Make sure plastic dome is securely shut and window storm flaps are rolled down. Be sure not to over tighten the plastic dome because it may crack, allowing water to seep in.
11. Make sure the fire is out in the fire pit. The coals should be cool to the touch. Drown the fire with plenty of water, stir and drown it again. Pack out any tin foil or non-burnable garbage.
12. Securely shut yurt door and make sure it is locked.

SAFETY

Everything you do on a backcountry tour should be done carefully. Use common sense and care when using the wood stove, propane stove and lanterns, starting the fire, chopping wood, etc. It's about three-hours to the nearest hospital. The closest public telephone is in Lowman and the second closest is the rest area in downtown Idaho City. If there is a medical emergency, call **Boise County Sheriff at 1-800-479-0911 or 1-800-632-8000.**

There is cell phone coverage for most systems at the high point on the Elkhorn trail once you've reached the top of the Banner Ridge. There is also coverage from Beaver Creek Summit on Highway 21.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST

The equipment listed below is included as a guide to help you prepare for a yurt trip. Dressing in layers is the best choice for outdoor activities. As you get warm you can take off layers, and as you cool down during breaks, you can put them back on.

PERSONAL:

sleeping bag
pillow - inflatable saves space
backpack
sunglasses
headlamp or small flashlight
matches in a waterproof container
lighter and fire starter
basic first aid kit
high energy trail snacks
emergency whistle
large water bottle
Yurt map
compass

small knife
toothbrush and paste
underwear
socks
gloves
jacket
shirts
shorts/pants
sun hat
windproof/waterproof shell jacket and hood
personal medications
watch

OPTIONAL:

bicycle and repair kit
wheelbarrow or bike trailer for hauling equipment
camera and extra film
binoculars
day or belt pack
slippers
extra flashlight batteries and bulb
small cooler for ice

GROUP:

yurt door lock combination
2 screw-in type small propane tanks for each day
7.5 minute quadrangle map
Boise National Forest map
roll of toilet paper
roll of paper towels
sun screen lotion
sun screen lip block
water filter or water jug

first aid kit that includes:

- first aid book
- moleskin
- gauze rolls
- chemical heat pack
- ace bandage
- 2" first-aid tape

- assorted band aids including butterfly
- triangular bandages and sterile pads
- anti-acid tablets
- strong pain medication
- Ibuprofen tablets
- antiseptic wound cleaner
- body thermometer
- latex gloves
- tweezer/scissor/nail clipper
- small mirror

emergency and repair kit that includes:

- small roll of duct or strapping tape
 - stick-on nylon patches
 - nylon cord/braided wire
 - safety pins
- food and drink